

Remarks:

Claims 1-7 and 10-20 remain for consideration in this application along with newly added claim 21. Claims 8 and 9 are withdrawn as being directed toward a non-elected species.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner and his supervisor for their courtesies during the recent interview in this case. During that interview, the prior art rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) to Noiles (4,676,798) was discussed. The Examiner and his supervisor suggested that Applicants amend the claims to define the locking relationship between the groove structure of the shell (i.e., the recessed region of the shell wall) and the catch lip of the retainer ring in order to distinguish the Noiles reference. Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to recite that the shell wall includes “an inwardly extending recessed region presenting a circumferential catch ledge proximal to said shell margin” and that the catch lip “extends into the confines of the recessed region” and engages the catch ledge. Independent claims 15 and 17 have also been similarly amended. Claim 21, which depends from claim 1, has been added to further recite that shell wall presents a circumferential retaining wall structure opposed from said catch ledge. The retaining wall structure and the catch ledge cooperatively define the recessed region or “groove structure” discussed during the interview.

While the amendments to the claims are fully supported by the Figures, especially Fig. 6, a portion of the specification, specifically the paragraphs beginning on page 3, line 32 and page 7, line 25 have been amended so as to provide textual support for the amendments.

Turning now to the prior art rejection to Noiles, it is clear that Noiles does not teach a prosthesis or method for hip arthroplasty as presently claimed. Particularly, Noiles does not teach a rigid retainer ring that presents an axially extending catch leg having an outwardly extending catch

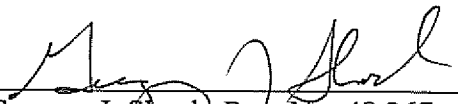
lip which extends into the confines of a recessed region formed in the shell wall of a rigid shell. As this structure is defined by all pending claims, Applicants submit that the rejection to Noiles has been overcome.

Applicants further submit that claim 1 is generic to elected Species B and non-elected Species A (depicted in Figure 1). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request consideration of claim 8 and 9 which are directed toward Species A.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that a Notice of Allowance appears to be in order and such is courteously solicited.

Any additional fee which is due in connection with this amendment should be applied against our Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

Respectfully submitted,

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